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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council meets to consider draft resolution that would extend suspension of economic sanctions against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for 100 days.

+ Secretary-General begins first official visit to Sweden; to meet with Prime Minister and attend luncheon hosted by King tomorrow.

+ Secretary-General expresses regret at Croatia's decision not to accept further renewal of UNPROFOR mandate beyond 31 March; cites risk of renewed hostilities should peace-keepers be withdrawn from country.

+ In address to Swedish Parliament, Secretary-General says international community must help strengthen Organization's ability to cultivate democracy.

+ United Nations agencies to evacuate international staff from Baidoa after killing of Somali UNICEF driver on Tuesday; ask international non-governmental organizations to take similar action in solidarity.

+ UNDP formally endorses German offer to host United Nations Volunteers programme; headquarters to move from Geneva to Bonn in mid-1996.

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The Security Council met today to consider a draft resolution that would extend its suspension of certain economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) for 100 days. Those sanctions were suspended by resolution 943 (1994) for an initial period of 100 days, provided that the border between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were closed.

The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina told the Council that it would be a mistake to extend the suspension of sanctions. He said that none of the objectives of resolution 943 (1994) had been realized and that the "Belgrade regime" had "continued to fuel the fire it had started" in Bosnia

and Herzegovina. He went on to say that the current border monitoring methodology was defective, and charged that resolution 943 had made it possible for the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs to coordinate their attacks on Bihac.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today began his first official visit to Sweden, and was received at Stockholm airport by Prime Minister Ingmar Carlsson. He was the guest of honour at a luncheon hosted by the Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, Birgitta Dahl, and then addressed the Parliament.

The Secretary-General later met with representatives of 30 Swedish non-governmental organizations active in the fields of peace and development. They presented him with a list of projects which they are implementing to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The Secretary-General praised the role of the non-governmental organizations in support of United Nations programmes and activities, particularly in the fields of education and information. Tomorrow, he will meet with the Prime Minister and attend a luncheon hosted by King Carl Gustaf XVI.

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The Secretary-General today said he very much regretted the Croatian Government's decision not to accept a further renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia beyond 31 March. He expressed grave concern about the risk of renewed hostilities should United Nations peace-keepers be withdrawn from the country. He was informed of the decision in a letter from Croatian President Franjo Tudjman.

The United Nations had played a decisive role in halting the brutal war in Croatia three years ago, and UNPROFOR had helped prevent a resumption of the fighting since, the Secretary-General continued. "While I am painfully aware of the frustration of the Croatian people that a final political settlement has eluded us, I should like to recall that the unremitting efforts of the international community have resulted in visible progress, particularly in the opening of the Zagreb-Belgrade highway", he said.

The Secretary-General went on to say that the international community would continue its dialogue with the Croatian Government on the issues raised in President Tudjman's letter. Meanwhile, he urged all parties to exercise the utmost restraint as efforts to restore lasting peace to the Balkan region continued.

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The international community must help the United Nations to strengthen its ability to cultivate democracy, according to the Secretary-General. In his address to the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm today, he said the Organization was a crucial resource in the process of building the democratic

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system. Democracy was the system that could best support international peace and development.

Within States, democracy created the stability necessary for peace, by promoting respect for human rights, and providing conditions in which people could express their will, he continued. Internationally, it engaged all States in decision-making on world affairs. Democracy was essential to ensure the viability of the State as an institution of governance and as a mechanism for human progress. Democracy, within and among States, was key to peace and development.

The Secretary-General paid tribute to Sweden for its support for the United Nations in the pursuit of development, peace and democracy. Such support was essential if the "age of democracy" were to be made a reality for all, he concluded.

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United Nations agencies have decided to evacuate their international staff from Baidoa following the killing of a Somali United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) driver there on Tuesday, according to a spokesman for the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). They have also asked international non-governmental organizations to take similar action as a sign of solidarity. The agencies had just returned to Baidoa a few weeks ago, having temporarily relocated their staff following UNOSOM II's withdrawal from the region.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Coordinating Team has scheduled a meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, tomorrow to consider the incident. Somali elders in Baodia told UNICEF that those responsible for the killing of the driver were known criminals and that they would eventually be apprehended.

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The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has formally endorsed Germany's offer to host the United Nations Volunteers programme. The headquarters of the Volunteers programme will move from Geneva to Bonn in mid-1996. The new premises are being provided rent-free and Germany will meet the cost of the move.

The Executive Director of the United Nations Volunteers, Brenda Gael McSweeney, welcomed the UNDP decision and praised Germany's commitment to the programme. "A manifestation of this commitment is that Germany will be doubling its financial support to the programme, from some 1.7 million deutsche marks to 3.4 million deutsche marks", she said.

The United Nations Volunteers programme, founded in 1970, has served 125 countries around the world. Some 4,000 Volunteers work each year in a variety of fields, including technical cooperation in the areas of health and agriculture.

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